Mire End Tribune
Issue 2 "Local News For Local People" 3p

Bombing Campaign Continues Unabated

Death, despair and injury are stalking the streets of Folly Hills. Over recent weeks a number of bomb attacks have taken place against Provost buildings and personnel. The most recent of these was two days ago. In that attack, two Provosts and five bystanders were killed. Many are said to be seriously injured.

Senior Provost sources have intimated that the bombers may be resident in Mire End. An un-named source said: "There is a strong belief that these terroristic elements are operating from Mire End. However, we've not yet been able to pin down any significant leads."

There is growing anger in Folly Hills over the bombings. Residents around the recently targeted Brookmyre Walk have been urging action. A number of residents stated to this reporter that the Provosts are not taking enough action.

Story continued inside.

Orphanage Collapse Tragedy

Tragedy has struck Mire End's only orphanage and workhouse. The eastern end of the Third Church Home for Dispossessed and Needy Infants collapsed yesterday, burying many in the rubble. The home, which occupied the entire northern side of Caller Lane, gave shelter to over two hundred children in varying states of health.

Many local people were quickly on the scene and attempted to rescue those trapped in the rubble. Said to be trapped were upwards of thirty children and three deacons of the Church. Eighteen bodies have so far been recovered from the scene. The eastern end of the building housed the rooms caring for those afflicted by mental imbalance and physical deformity.

The Church does not plan to rebuild the collapsed sections of the orphanage.

Macrocorps Refuse Responsibility

Both the Hirplakker and Arclight macrocorps again refused to receive petitions from Mire End residents. The petitions relate to the destruction caused around H-Street and Powell during the so-called 'Hundred Block War'. The devastation caused by both sides during their foray into Mire End has never been repaired.

Two representatives of Mire End travelled far across The City and at great expense to deliver the petitions. Their advances were refused by both macrocorps. Both representatives returned to Mire End a few days ago in a thoroughly depressed state. They were unwilling to give further comment.

University Success For Local Girl

Local youngster Grace Barrowmaker has been accepted to study at Longshore University. Grace, 18, is self taught and passed the stringent Longshore entrance exams with flying colours. Her parents are very proud. Her father, Ernst, said: "I'm delighted for our wee girl. She's worked so hard for years for this. She got jobs to buy books and visit libraries. She's done well." Her mother, Charity, stated: "Although she's going far away across The City and we won't see her for a long while, we're very proud."

Grace has been accepted to study at the famous university in the department of history. When this reporter called, she was unable to give an interview, having been celebrating with friends the previous night.

Cold & Damp?

Turn to page 8

from the grounds

bloated corporate structure

As those of you who have been keeping up to date with developments on the website will know, Contested Ground Studios have recently added another member of staff. Iain McAllister has joined the team as editor on **a/state** and developer on a number of other projects. Iain has previosly been part of the world-wide development team for Shadowforce:Archer and has represented Fantasy Flight Games in the UK.

on the road

In an effort spread the word about **a/state** (and get away from Falkirk for a while), Contested Ground Studios (well, John and Malcolm anyway) recently headed up to Asylum Books & Games in Aberdeen for a day of demoing, chat and drinking large amounts of coffee. Many thanks to Mike and his staff at Asylum for their kind hospitality throughout the day and to all the folks who turned up and took time to chat and take part in the demo.

we have crystal balls

In a sneak preview of what CGS will be up to in 2003, here's a taster of some upcoming releases…

Looking beyond **a/state**, we'll be releasing Iain McAllisters game of gangsters and prohibition in PDF format. Tentatively entitled **'Mob Justice'**, it should be available for consumption in the first half of 2003. Also appearing in the first half of 2003 will be **'AstraGothica'** (again, still a working title), a game of soul-destroying horror in the depths of space. Players take the part of a starship crew in a future where something from the darkness between the stars has discovered mankind. Written by Andy MacVicar and Tam Connelly, **'AstraGothica'** will also be for sale in PDF format.

Moving on to **a/state**, we've already got a slate of supplements planned, some in hardcopy and some in PDF format. In addition to this, we're also planning a series of high-quality PDFs in the style of an internal report from each of the macrocorps (more to follow on these sometime soon). These mini supplements will be on sale at about £2 ($3) each.

submissions

In this, only the second issue of the Mire End Tribune, you'll find two adventure nuggets that have been written by readers/players of **a/state**. The first is 'False Accusations', written by Tam Connelly, who's actually part of our playtest group. The second is 'Tower Trouble' which was sent to us from Holland by Ron van der Velden. Thanks to both Ron and Tam for talking the time to write something and submit it to us. If anyone else out there would like to submit anything for the 'Tribune, just get in contact with us at:

info@contestedground.co.uk

the reading list

A new section in 'The Mire End Tribune', The Reading List will appear each month to highlight any books, films, comics or CDs that CGS staff have been particularly impressed by in recent months. This time around, what have the CGS staff been reading recently?

malcolm

'The Skinner' (novel) by Neal Asher, **'The Red Star: The Battle of Kar Dathra's Gate'** (graphic novel), **'The Red Star: Nogorka'** (graphic novel).

paul

'The Scar' (novel) by China Mieville, **'Kitchen Confidential'** (autobiography) by Anthony Bourdain, **'Mr Nice'** (autobiography) by Richard Marks.

john

'Titus Groan' (novel) by Mervyn Peake.

iain

'Dead Long Enough' (novel) by James Hawes, **'Survivor'** (novel) by Chuck Palanhuik.

for your viewing pleasure

false accusations

By Tam Connelly

Some of the rougher, more organised and certainly more militant elements of Mire End society are currently in the throes of running a bombing/ terror campaign against the Provosts in Folly Hills. This, at least, is well known. Commander Japarov (see Issue 1 of 'The Mire End Tribune') is quite beside himself with fury at this and has ordered his men to capture the terrorists at all costs. The Provosts have taken this as *carte blanche* to use any and all techniques at their disposal to try and sort the problem out. It is during this turbulent period that the characters get caught up in an unfortunate conspiracy of circumstances…

The PCs will be eating/shopping/ drinking or whatever at one of their favourite Folly Hills haunts when they hear a muffled but still very loud explosion in the vicinity. A nearby Provost phone box has just been

demolished by some means and people are running hither and thither in a state of great panic. Wherever the PCs happen to be (in the street or observing events from a place of safety) they will suddenly be bowled over by a large group of people running from the scene. They are all wearing shabby clothes (a pretty common sight around here) and have dirty strips of cloth tied over their faces, obscuring their features. There will be enough of them of knock down all the PCs in the rush, possibly scattering any weapons the PCs might be carrying. The nameless terrorists have struck again. However, this time, the Provosts were on to them and arrive in substantial numbers in fairly short order. Cue a case of wrongful arrest…

As the real terrorists have made their escape, the Provost officers on the scene need someone to pin things on, some suitably shady looking types, who habitually carry weapons, who seem less than reputable. In fact, this description fits perfectly most PC parties, so they'll find themselves collared by the Provosts and accused of being violent, malicious, bomb-throwing anarchists. Oh dear. If they manage to scavenge together all their pennies and shillings, they might just be able to afford bail (as the Provosts are not at all certain they've got the right people). The PCs are faced with some rather dubious choices:

They could endeavour to clear their names by investigating the terrorist activity. Needless to say, the Provosts would be very grateful for this, but then again, it could also land the players in a lot of trouble with various factions.

They could try and erase all traces of the case. This would probably involve killing several Provosts, breaking in to the central Provost Bunker in Folly Hills and doing damage to the files stored on the big dingins there and probably end up with the PCs getting killed. Not a very viable option.

They could attempt to disappear completely. This could lead to all sorts of problems in itself, as the Provosts attempt to keep tabs on the PCs, other interests hear about their alleged involvement and either take a strong liking to the characters or try and have them turfed out of their territory/killed/tortured/turned over to the Provosts or any one of a number of unpleasant outcomes. Possible places to escape to might be to hide out in Mire End (which, to the Provosts, would seem very suspicious) or perhaps take a lengthy journey across The City to visit areas they have hitherto never visited.

The first option is perhaps the one that the GM should subtly steer the players towards, i.e.: try and find who are the real culprits behind the bombings. Several theories have been put forward regarding the bombings, the most prominent of which have been:

Theory 1:
It's those bloody Collectivists!

A small cadre of Red Canal Collectivist Republic (RCCR) sympathisers have established themselves in Mire End and are carrying out a gradually escalating terrorist war in order to disrupt the activities of the Three Canals Metropolitan Area Authority (TCMAA). They have high ideals about bringing the TCMAA crashing down and the RCCR boldly stepping in to save the oppressed peoples.

Theory 2:
It's those bloody kids!

One of the larger gangs of thugs, yobs and general hooligans which are so much a part of life in Mire End has introduced a new initiation ritual. Groups of new gang members are sent out with home made bombs to blow up a selected Provost target, such as a phone box, rest shed or checkpoint. They are building up to an attempt to blow up the central Provost Bunker in Folly Hills, an act

that most people would consider one of extreme stupidity.

Theory 3:
It's those bloody religious fanatics

A small, marginal sect named The Speakers of The Will has established a cell in Mire End. Their tenets include violent opposition to atheistic authority (such as the TCMAA) and the structures which allow such authorities to preserve their power (such as the Provosts). The Speakers are very much in to the belief that if you believe you can do something, then it can be achieved. In truth, there is a cell of The Speakers of The Will in Mire End, lead by the charismatic but slightly insane Kingston Roland. Whether or not they are behind the terrorist attacks is up to the GM.

tower trouble

by Ron van der Velden

From Arclight
Internal News Service

"Duncan Shiver, an officer of the 6th Company (Internal Security), First Regiment, Brigade of Light has been found dead in his apartment on Gloworm Crescent, just south of Luminosity Tower. He had been stabbed in the back several times with a long, sharp object, which forensic experts from the company believe was probably a ceramic blade. The perpetrator is still unknown, but Brigade of Light Criminal Investigation Department officers believe that it has to be someone from within his circle of friends and colleagues. The suspicion is that no one else would have been able to approach him this closely without being noticed.

In normal life, Shiver was on permanent detachment to the security forces at Luminosity Tower. Colleagues described him as a considerate, open man who had time for everyone. If anyone had a problem, they could turn to him and he would always be there for them. Most of them are shocked by this apparently cruel and motiveless murder. And none of them has a clue about who could have committed the crime."

The Facts Of The Case

At the 6th hour Warrant Officer Shiver left his apartment and made his way to Luminosity Tower. On the way he stopped at a newspaper stall, bought a newspaper and continued his journey. Then thirteen minutes later , at 6:13, he arrived at Luminosity Tower personal entrance 3B. With a pale face he entered the canteen and sat down. He ordered a cup of tea and a fishcake and then he opened his newspaper and sat there for about ten minutes. He then stood up, went on to the lockers and changed into his working clothes.

Duty started at 6:30, and he and nine other security officers made their rounds through their assigned area of the building. Nothing notable happened on the way and as usual at 12:30, the entire crew took a lunch-break. Then at the 13th hour, work started again but this time Warrant Officer Shiver did not take part in the routine. He had a meeting with other officers, so declared Lieutenant Colonel Garlock, currently officer commanding the internal security forces at Luminosity Tower. During the meeting, Warrant Officer Shiver was said to be very absent-minded. Sometimes he didn't even hear the questions and just gave random answers. Another officer reports that Shiver indeed looked pale that day. At 17:27, the meeting came to an end, and Officer Shiver went home. On the way he met his ex-wife (who also works for Arclight) and his two young children. He asked them to come over to his house to have some tea, but unfortunately they already had an other appointment and they depart in fairly short order. Then, at 17:56, Shiver arrived at his apartment so said another tenant. The tenant greeted Warrant Officer Shiver but got no reaction, Shiver seemed to be in a hurry. Then at 20:36 the tenant went to the third floor to visit a Mr Haltor who lived next to Shiver. When he arrived at the third floor he saw Officer Shiver lying there on the ground with his door-keys still clutched in his hand.

The Suspects

Suspect 1:
The Tenant

He has lost a lot of money betting on illegal ekranoplan races and when he arrived back at his apartment he was in a black mood. Then Warrant Officer Shiver came in and, in the tenant's mind, made a mean comment about him. In his already bad mood, he went into a furious rage. Without thinking about the consequences he ran up the stairs and, blinded by anger, stabbed Shiver in the back.

Suspect 2:
His Ex-wife

When they met on the street, Shiver informed his ex-wife that he had decided to take legal proceedings through Arclight's internal courts system. Previously, she prevented him from seeing his children and, through the courts, he wants to claim his right to see his kids. His ex-wife went mad over this and followed him to his apartment. Taking the fire-escape at the rear of the building she crept in and stabbed her ex-husband in his back several times.

Suspect 3:
Lieutenant Colonel Garlock

Many of the Brigade of Light officers in Luminosity Tower are corrupt to some extent, whether it be nepotism, taking bribes to ignore the indiscre-

tions of senior executives or or simply stealing stuff from under the nose of the company. Shiver discovered that Garlock was heavily involved in blackmail of an executive whom he has caught in a variety of compromising and embarrassing situations. Garlock decided to threaten Shiver, hoping that this relatively quiet, unassuming man would be easily cowed by the prospect of immediate physical violence. When Shiver didn't responding to the threats, there was only one option left Garlock and that was to take Shiver out.

faces in the crowd

kingston roland

by Tam Connelly

Age: 43

Height/Build: 6' 1"/Well-muscled

Eye/Hair Colour: Green/black

Occupation: Itinerant preacher and religious demagogue

Affiliations: The Speakers of the Will

Charismatic, forceful and only very slightly mad, Kingston Roland has made it his goal to establish thriving communities of Speakers of the Will in some of the worst places in The City. He has already established cells in Fogwarren and Burningfell and has now turned his attentions to Mire End.

A powerfully built man, with dark, almost pitch black skin, he is loaded with charisma and physical presence. He towers over the malnourished, sickly citizens of Mire End, his deep bass voice booming out the tenets of the sect, promising riches untold if only the people will exercise their will. He preaches against efforts to bring Mire End into the fold of the Three Canals Metropolitan Area Authority (TCMAA) and encourages independence and freedom of action.

While not yet drawing in large crowds (most of those with a religious bent in Mire End belonging to the Third Church of God The Architect), Roland has managed to attract a core of a dozen or so believers. They meet in a series of decrepit, second storey rooms in a half-occupied, boken down tenement on Rue Hesse. In this cold, dripping environment, Roland orates, berates, cajoles and mollycoddles in an attempt to broaden his power-base. Some are occasionally drawn in by the promise of hot soup or a steaming cup of tea. Some are drawn in through sheer curiosity, others dragged along by friends or relatives.

The Speakers of the Will and Kingston Roland are gradually building up a reputation in Mire End, a place where hope and faith are in extremely short supply.

the workshop

arclight tentenel armour

'Tentenel' armour: the steel fist of The Brigade of Light. The suit is briefly described in the 'Product' section of the main **a/state** book, but this article goes into the workings and applications of the suit in a little more detail.

Tentenel armour provides Arclight heavy infantry with an environmentally sealed, power-assisted protective suit ideally suited to urban warfare. It's compact dimensions (in comparison to the clunky powered suits utilised by other macrcorps) and extensive sensory apparatus make it superior in almost every respect to any other similar item in The City. It is, however, very (very, very) expensive to produce, hence the rather small numbers which the Brigade of Light can field at any one time.

Armour & Frame

The armour of a Tentenel suit is made up of layers of ceramic, ballistic fibres, ablative gels and light alloys designed to withstand great impacts and to disperse the effects of kinetic energy ack-am rounds. The ablative gel layers also serve to mitigate the effects of shaped charge or squash head ack-am rounds. All of this armour is fixed to a frame which is actuated by fibre muscle bundles (as opposed to the hydraulic systems or gearing mechanisms used by other suits). This makes the suit far more responsive than any other comparable item.

Communications

In situations where it is possible, a Tentenel squad is hardlinked via spooling fibrelines attached to the rear of the suit. These connect together at a central node (usually an APC or command vehicle) which allows instantaeous tramission of data between suits and a central command post. Should this not be possible (or in situations where having a long cable trailing behind you would be a liability), the suits can communicate via Direct Line Of Sight (D-LOS) lasers. The D-LOS system will attempt to keep a link open with at least one other suit and so on, with all the suits attempting to gain as much coverage as possible to allow communication between all units. In the maze-like environment of The City, keeping other units in sight is not always possible, so individual suits have a stock of sticky-backed prisms which they can place on walls, at corners or in other locations so that comm beams can be tramitted round corners and suchlike. As a teriatry communications syetm, should the previous two options be unviable, Tentenel troopers are taught a complex sign language.

Power

Power for the suit can be derived from several sources. When linked together by the fibrelines mentioned above, power can be transmitted

directly down the lines. However, this is not often possible as the fibrelines are the first items to be ditched in combat. For independent action, Tentenel suits use two sources of power. The main source is a pair of tiny diesel engines burning rare and expensive diesel oil and liquid oxygen. These are connected to a pair of dynamos which generate the electrical power required to run the suit. These two engines can be run together, or seperately, giving a certain amount of redundency in combat. They are also very quiet and can be used in almost all environments. As a back up, the suit has a dispersed series of superconducting battery modules. These can power the suit at full combat effectiveness for up to half and hour. In addition, the diesel engines can recharge the superconductor blocks.

Sensors

Tentenel suits are equipped with a variety of sensory mechanisms, useful in a wide range of environments. Image enhacement and thermal viewing systems are built in to the helmet, whilst pressure sensors, vibration detectors and sound enhancement systems are all fitted as standard. A laser based scanning mechanism is also used, controlled by a dedicated digin in the body of the suit. This mechanism scans a hemisphere around the suit, functioning as a sensory system and tracking mechanism for the 'Viridian' point defense weapon.

Armaments

Given its sensitive manipulatory appendages, the Tentenel can carry a wide variety of weapons systems. Most common of these is the Furien 'Boomer' A1 Attack Cannon, a multi-function 21mm magnetic repeater weapon, able to fire a wide variety of loads. Other weapons, such as machineguns and microhowitzers can also be carried. Mounted high on the left shoulder of the suit is the 'Viridian' point defense weapon, a compact, rapid pulsing laser system designed to defeat thrown weapons, missiles and rockets.

Stats for the main weapons systems of the Tentenel will be detailed in the main **a/state** rulebook.

Game Stats

AV: 90

Cost: £35,000

Weight: 250lbs

Bonuses: +40 to all weapons fire, STR becomes 120 when using suit, 'Viridian' system has a 75% chance of hitting any missile, rocket or thrown item directed at the suit. It fires once the item is within 25m of the suit. A single hit will usually disable or destroy the target.

glossary

Ack-am: Military slang for anti-armour weapons.

Brigade of Light, the: Armed forces of Arclight macrocorp.

Hundred Block War, the: A short, but extremely violent conflict between Hirplakker and Arclight. The war established Arclight's status as a macrocorporate power.

Magnetic Repeater: A weapon which fires projectiles by accelerating them with a series of stepped electromagnets.

Provost Bunker: Common name for the heavily fortified police stations used by the Three Canals Metropolitan Area Authority Provosts.

Red Canal Collectivist Republic: Controls a large area of land on the western bank of the Red Canal immediately opposite the Three Canals Metropolitan Area. Governed through the doctrine of 'collectivism', where there is no individual property and everyone has an equal say. Some view the RCCR as a breeding ground for foolish idealists, others see it as a bastion of order in a deranged world.

the credits

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